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VOC FOR IOP/FN  
BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-5647  
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MARCH 24, 1978

## THE MORO CASE AND THE ITALIAN MOOD

ANNCR:

FOR A BACKGROUND REPORT ON THE POLITICAL MOOD IN ROME IN THE WAKE OF TERRORIST KIDNAPPING OF THE SENIOR ITALIAN POLITICAL LEADER, ALDO MORO, HERE IS VOA CORRESPONDENT MARK HOPKINS IN THE ITALIAN CAPITAL.

VOICE:

AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE KIDNAPPING, QUESTIONS ARE BEING RAISED ABOUT WHETHER THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT IS CAPABLE OF DEALING WITH THIS IMMEDIATE THREAT AND CHALLENGE TO AUTHORITY, AND WITH THE LONG-TERM PROBLEM OF DISORDER AND VIOLENCE. ONE KEY OBSERVER, THE RESPECTED ITALIAN AUTHOR AND POLITICIAN, LUIGI BARZINI, DESCRIBES THE SITUATION AS DISARRAY. THE KIDNAPPING ITSELF, HE SAYS, PROVIDES FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE DECLINE OF ITALY.

MISTER BARZINI, FOREIGN DIPLOMATS, LEADING ITALIAN JOURNALISTS -- ALL SEEM TO AGREE THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS UNDER GIULIO ANDREOTTI, SUPPORTED NOW BY THE COMMUNISTS, HAS FAILED THUS FAR TO TAKE HOLD OF THIS CRITICAL SITUATION. AND, ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT HAS PUSHED THROUGH NEW POLICE POWERS, THEY TURN OUT TO BE THE SAME MEASURES PROPOSED FOR YEARS BY PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE POLICE ARE DRAWING INCREASING CRITICISM, EVEN RIDICULE, BECAUSE OF WHAT THE ROME PRESS DESCRIBES AS BLUNDERS. A NEWS BLACKOUT BY THE INTERIOR MINISTRY UNAVOIDABLY SPAWNS RUMORS AND IMPATIENCE.

BY WAY OF CONTRAST, RED BRIGADE TERRORISTS WHO ARE HOLDING MISTER MORO SOMEWHERE -- POLICE THINK THEY COULD BE ANYWHERE IN ITALY NOW -- GIVE THE OPPOSITE IMPRESSION. THE KIDNAPPING A WEEK AGO, AS IT HAS BEEN RECONSTRUCTED, WAS ACCOMPLISHED WITH

PRECISION AND SWIFT VIOLENCE. THE TERRORISTS HAVE NOT ONLY VANISHED, BUT IN ISSUING A COMMUNIQUE AND PHOTOGRAPH OF MISTER MORO, THEY HAVE GIVEN THE IMPRESSION OF BEING WELL ORGANIZED. THUS, AT THIS POINT, IN THE PUBLIC MIND, THE RED BRIGADE TERRORISTS, NOT THE GOVERNMENT, SEEM TO BE IN COMMAND OF THE SITUATION.

THIS IS ONE ASPECT OF THE MORO CASE. THE OTHER IS THE POLITICAL ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND COMMUNISTS. THE COMMUNIST PARTY NOW SHARES RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOVERNMENT ACTIONS, ALTHOUGH IT HAS NO CABINET SEATS. THE COMMUNISTS, UNDER ENRICO BERLINGUER, HAVE BACKED THE NEW POLICE POWERS, JOINING THE RISING CHORUS OF DEMANDS BY THE ITALIAN MIDDLE AND WORKING CLASSES FOR LAW AND ORDER. SO THE POLITICAL QUESTION BEING ASKED, BUT NOT YET ANSWERED, IS WHETHER THE COMMUNISTS WILL GAIN MORE STANDING IN THIS FIRST TEST OF THE PACT WITH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. THE MOST SKEPTICAL OBSERVERS HERE SEE THE NEW POLICE POWERS AS "TOO LITTLE TOO LATE." AND, RIGHT NOW, NO ONE HERE, -- GOVERNMENT LEADERS, FOREIGNERS, OR INFORMED ITALIAN COMMENTATORS -- IS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE, EVEN IF MISTER MORO IS RELEASED ALIVE AND UNHARMED.

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WJL/RTD